

# The battle for veterans' votes

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With a federal election later this year, a full-scale battle is underway to win the hearts and minds of Canada's veterans and convince the public the country's former soldiers are well taken care of.

In one corner are the Conservatives, with what they hope is the support of those they view as the more traditional — and, some argue, more docile — veterans.

The government's message is that the country's veterans are being fairly treated.

In the other corner are some outspoken advocacy groups, made up mainly of modern-day veterans. They aren't shy about publicly highlighting what they see as the government's failure to provide for former soldiers.

Representatives from those latter groups — Veterans of Canada, Veteranvoice.info and Canadian Veterans Advocacy — found them-

selves frozen out in November from a Veterans Affairs Canada stakeholders' advisory panel to which they had previously contributed.

The stakeholders' panel, chaired by the deputy minister of Veterans Affairs, helps provide direction and feedback to the government on changes that could affect former military personnel.

The minister at the time was Julian Fantino.

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